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must have been very plain indeed, when such an admission was made. But we are somewhat at a loss to reconcile this admission with another document given in page 283—"Numberless miracles are constantly taking place among those who crowd around the venerated picture: some are suddenly healed of inveterate maladies admitted to be incurable; the blind recover their sight, the dumb their speech, and paralytics the use of their limbs." Yet the writer, in page 287, admits that all these miracles, except "two or three," were downright lies! And even of those "two or three" he tells us that the bishop "very prudently" (as he says, and in which we entirely agree) considers that he ought not to publish them until he is able to give proof that the alleged diseases were really incurable.

But we have some further information. In that same page (287) we are told that the editor of a paper, called the *Armoria*, wrote to the Bishop of Rimini for official information, and the bishop's answer is given—"The public testimony of persons of every condition, not only of this village and diocese, but also of several cities of the Pontifical States of Tuscany, of the Lombardo Venetian kingdom, and other places, render worthy of all belief the movement of the eyes of our holy picture of Mary, mother of mercy, a miracle which has not ceased for fifty days up to the present hour. This extraordinary event is verified by a judicial inquiry pursued in my palace, and the documents and proofs of the fact will be published in due time. You must, for the moment, be contented with the universal testimony, and invite those who refuse to admit the miracle, to come here and see it with their eyes, which has been done by many persons who have returned from the place completely convinced."

Now, it strikes us as somewhat strange that the Bishop of Rimini, professing to have in his hands a judicial proof of the fact, should tell the editors of the *Armoria* that they must, for the moment, be content with the universal testimony. Seeing that one of the documents just before given (p. 283), claims this "universal testimony" for "numberless miracles" worked by the image, and the other document admits that all except "two or three" are clearly false, and that even those two or three it is not safe to publish! is not this most satisfactory evidence on which to believe? But the Bishop of Rimini begs them to be content with it "for the moment." This was in 1850. We have looked with interest to the "Catholic Directory" for 1852 for the "judicial proofs" which the bishop promised should be "published in due time," and we find nothing on the subject. So far as we can find, "the moment" for believing on false reports still continues; the proofs have never yet been published.

Now, can any one believe that if these proofs were really conclusive, they would have been concealed from the public ever since? Would not the persons concerned in the miracle have been only too anxious to publish them? And if it be the fact, as we suppose, that nothing of the kind has ever been published, is it not pretty clear that the object was to get the thing believed upon that public report which is confessed to be false, and to leave it so, upon Napoleon's maxim, that a falsehood once believed is sufficient for its purpose!

Now the question we conclude with is this—Do the Roman Catholics of Ireland believe these stories upon such evidence? Do they put these miracles, and the proof of these miracles, on an equality with the miracles of our Blessed Saviour, and the proofs of those miracles? We are satisfied that our readers will say, they do not. Well, then, can they help acknowledging that these miracles are tricks and impositions? And if so, can they account for the fact, that while these accounts are circulated far and wide among the

Irish people in the "Catholic Directory," on the authority of the Bishop of Rimini himself, not one of the bishops or priests of Ireland, by whose subscriptions that "Directory" is circulated (and who are so zealous in preserving the laity from all that is dangerous to their faith and morals in the enlightened and profitable education of the Queen's Colleges), should ever have raised their voices to warn Catholics from believing the delusions which are sought to be spread among them on the authority of the Bishop of Rimini and his confederates.\*

Truly the Roman Catholic laity of Ireland are called upon in such a case to vindicate their common sense and judgment from the imputation of believing or submitting to such manifest impostures, &c., and we shall rejoice to hear that they do so.

### THE TOUCHSTONE.

A ROMAN Catholic publication, called the *Touchstone*, has recently appeared—or, at least, recently attracted notice—to which we wish to call our readers' attention.

The *Touchstone* is a very important little tract, and one whose design, at least, ought to be approved by every fair-minded Protestant. It is an appeal to Scripture as the "touchstone" by which to try what doctrines are true or false. And Scripture is the one common authority which is acknowledged by both Roman Catholics and Protestants. Now, in all subjects, the only way in which a dispute between any two persons can be settled, is to appeal to some authority which is equally acknowledged by both of them. When, for instance, we are endeavouring to convert a Pagan to Christianity, we would not begin by assuming the truth of the Christian Scriptures, and appealing to them; because this would be to suppose him a Christian already; but we must first prove that there is good reason for his believing that our sacred books contain a true history, from which it will follow that Jesus Christ and his Apostles must have really been from God; and then we may proceed to point out to him what it is that they teach us to believe and to do.

So, also, in any discussion between a Roman Catholic and a Protestant, it would be absurd to begin by assuming that the decisions of the Church of Rome and her traditions and interpretations of Scripture are to be received; because, supposing this were true, it is the very thing which Protestants deny; and if they admitted it, they would be Roman Catholics already, and not Protestants. The appeal, therefore, must be made (as is done in this tract) to the Bible itself, and to that sense of each text which both Roman Catholics and Protestants can agree in acknowledging.

Now, it is usually supposed that the Church of Rome discourages the general study of Scripture, and considers it as likely to lead to dangerous error, except in the hands of learned divines, or under their guidance, and with their interpretations. But the writer of this tract evidently holds another opinion: for it is plain, that in order to make the use of it that this author designed, a man should furnish himself with a Bible, and study it attentively, and espe-

cially look to the texts referred to, and the passages in which they occur, and then judge for himself as well as he can, whether they are for or against his religion.

Every one must admit that this is a fair mode of proceeding. But in this Tract, opinions are attributed to Protestants which the generality of them, at least, do not hold; and several of the texts brought forward are understood by every Protestant in a sense very different from that which is here put upon them. It has been thought advisable, therefore, to republish this tract, with its sixty supposed expositions of Protestant doctrine (which we may call sixty mistakes), to each of which we shall furnish replies, in order to explain what it is that Protestants do really hold.

### ERRONEOUS EXPOSITIONS OF THE PROTESTANT FAITH, FROM THE "TOUCHSTONE."

**OBJECTION 1.**—Protestants, in order to justify their new religion, affirm that before their pretended Reformation, "laity and clergy, learned and unlearned, all ages, sects, and degrees of men, women, and children, of whole Christendom, were at once drowned in abominable idolatry, and that for 800 years and more"—*Homily of peril of Idolatry* approved by the 35th and 39th articles, part 3; and, consequently, they must hold, that for all that space of time, the gates of hell prevailed against the Church of Christ. Their own Bible, in plain and express terms, declares the contrary. St. Matthew, xvi. 18. *Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

**REPLY.**—Protestants do not hold that before the Reformation there were no pure worshippers of God: "that all the laity and clergy, &c., &c., were at once drowned in abominable idolatry." The Vaudois Church resisted that idolatry.

The meaning of the *Homily* is that idolatry was generally prevalent; when "children of all ages" are expressly mentioned in the *Homily* as exposed to this evil, it is plain it could not be meant, that infants were actually practising idolatry.

Protestants do not infer from this passage of St. Matthew, that errors and abuses would never creep into the Christian Church, but that they would not prevail to destroy it. By the "gates of hell," is here meant the power of death; for the word hell is here, and in many places of Scripture, the translation of the original word "hades," which signifies the grave, or place of the departed.

Those who have so misunderstood our Lord's prediction, may correct their mistake by referring to many things written by the Apostles. For example, when Paul was taking his final leave of the elders of Miletus and Ephesus (clergy), he warned them (Acts xx.) "that grievous wolves would, after his departure, enter in among them, not sparing the flock," and also, that "even from among their own selves (the clergy) men would arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." So that this apostle of our Lord (and it is the same in other parts of the apostolic writings), predicted that grievous error would creep into that church, against which, nevertheless, his Lord declared "the gates of hell" should "not prevail."

**OBJECTION 2.**—Protestants maintain that for many hundred years before Luther, there was no church upon earth, with which a Christian might lawfully join in communion; that all were notoriously gone astray from the purity of the Gospel; and, consequently, that Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life (St. John xiv. 6), was not with any church before the Reformation, because they were all gone astray from the way, the truth, and the life. Their own Bible assures us that this could never be. St. Matt., xxviii., 19, 20. "Go teach all nations, and lo. I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

**REPLY.**—Protestants do not maintain this; for it is well known that there have always been faithful worshippers of Christ, who protested against the errors of the Romish Church, and preserved pure the apostolic faith—as the church of the Vaudois, a body of Christians, among the mountains of Piedmont, who never fell into the errors of the Church of Rome.

**OBJECTION 3.**—Protestants teach, that the spirit of truth was not promised to the church of Christ, to be with her teachers for ever, and to guide them into all truth.

Their own Bible, in clear and plain terms, contradicts this their assertion (St. John, xiv. 16, 17), *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the spirit of truth.* And, St. John, xvi. 13, *When he, the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.*

**REPLY.**—Protestants do believe that the spirit of truth is promised to be with Christ's church for ever, leading both teachers and taught into all truth, through the ordinary means of his divine grace, one of which means is the right use of Scripture; but not as conferring infallibility on any church or set of teachers since the apos-

\* It is not merely the Bishop of Rimini that is implicated in these transactions. The document which we have quoted from page 283 brings in the following persons:—"The Bishop of Pesaro; the Prolegate of the province of Pesaro and Urbino; the delegate of Forlì; Vicars-general, an inquisitor (it seems there are such persons in Italy), three vicars of the Holy Office, and many other persons whom we pass in silence attest the fact. We would mention among others, the Commissary-general of the Four Legations, who came from Bologna, where he resides, to Rimini, saw the miracle, venerated most devoutly, and more than once, the august picture, and gave in honour of it a beautiful chalice, &c." All these are persons in high office in the Roman Church in Italy. It would seem as if all his Holiness's officials are working to try and get Catholics to believe these pretended miracles, of which, as far as we can see, they have not yet ventured to publish the judicial proofs.

ties, whose teaching was accredited by the extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit—i. e., by miracles.

**OBJECTION 4.**—Protestants assert that the church of the living God is not the pillar and ground of truth, but may, and often does, uphold damnable errors.

Their own Bible expressly declares, 1 Tim. iii. 15, that the church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth, and, consequently, cannot uphold damnable errors.

**REPLY.**—Protestants certainly do deny that this passage—whatever it means—does or can allude to the Church of Rome, since the church in which Timothy was to “know how he ought to behave himself,” was that of which he was bishop—i. e., Ephesus, and not Rome. But Roman Catholics are accustomed to take it for granted that whatever is said in Scripture concerning “the church” must apply to the Church of Rome; and hence the above mistake. They should prove this assumption by Scripture.

But with respect to the passage here quoted from the Epistle to Timothy, the sense of it evidently depends on the punctuation; and some of the ablest divines are convinced that there should be a full stop at “Church of God,” and then the succeeding sentence will run thus: “A pillar and ground of the truth, and without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:” which mystery the apostle proceeds to state was, God manifest in the flesh, &c., &c. And every scholar must admit that the words of the original Greek will bear that sense as well as the other.

(To be continued.)

#### Correspondence.

##### THE REAL PRESENCE.

We insert the following able correspondence between the Rev. R. A. Wilson, of Glasgow, and the Rev. W. Carson, of Waterford, with which we were favoured last month, but which reached us too late for insertion in our last number:—

Abercromby-street, Glasgow,

February 18, 1852.

REV. AND DEAR SIR—Mrs. F. has enclosed to me a communication received from you, containing what you consider three unanswerable difficulties to the Catholic doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the blessed Eucharist. I regret I did not receive them when in Waterford, as time and opportunity were then at my disposal. However, I shall be happy at any time to steal a few moments from the press and hurry of my daily duties, to answer or explain any difficulty which you may be pleased to propose, and trust you will dispassionately read and study my reply. I am likewise fully satisfied that you may make whatever honourable use you may please of them. I say honourable, because should you please to give them publicity at any future time, I should request that my answers should not be curtailed, even as to a sentence, inasmuch as the duties of the Glasgow mission are so incessant, that I shall never, perhaps, have a fair opportunity to say all I might wish; and, therefore, there will be nothing said which will not be to the point, whilst I must, necessarily, omit much which might be added with benefit. Your first objection is substantially as follows:—

Paschasius, in the year 831, was the first person who wrote a treatise on transubstantiation. He was opposed by Raban Maur, a Catholic Archbishop, and by Heribald and others. Although you have not drawn your conclusions from these premises, I premise I am justified in anticipating it, by saying, therefore, the doctrine of transubstantiation dates from Paschasius, in the ninth century.

Reverend sir, Paschasius did not write a treatise on “transubstantiation;” but (A.D. 818) he wrote one on the body and blood of Christ, in which he advanced no new doctrine, but merely gave the doctrine of the universal Church in the 9th century. His words are, and I beg of you to consider them attentively—“Although some err through ignorance, yet no person, as yet, has publicly called into question what the whole world believes and confesses.” “Quamvis ex hoc quidam de ignorantia errent, nemo tamen est adhuc in aperto, qui hoc ita esse contradicat quod totus orbis credit et confitetur.” And, again, he says—“Let him who would contravene this truth, consider what he does against his Lord, and against all the Church of Christ. It is, therefore, a most grievous crime to pray with all, and not believe what truth teaches, and what all the Christians of the universe profess.” “Videat qui contra hoc venire voluerit, quid agat contra ipsum dominum et contra omnem Christi ecclesiam. Nefarium ergo scelus est, orare cum omnibus et non credere quod veritas ipsa testatur et ubique omnes universaliter verum esse fatentur.” Now, it is not denied, even by Protestant writers, that Paschasius maintained, during life, a character eminent both for sanctity and learning, and I, therefore, dispassionately put the question—Is the above the language of a man broaching a new theory on a most vital point of Catholic doctrine? or should not Paschasius have been absolutely demoted in asserting, in the face of the world, that the belief in the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist, was the universal faith of Christianity

at the moment he was writing, when, in reality, it was nowhere believed, but was merely his own private speculation. I have no doubt, reverend sir, but that you will acknowledge the full force of this observation, if you bestow due attention to the testimony which I have above adduced.

You say that Paschasius was opposed by Raban Maur and others. Now, reverend sir, I admit it, for the sake of giving you all the advantage you can desire, although you must be aware, that neither Catholics nor Protestants agree as to the precise doctrine of the opponents of Paschasius. The manuscript epitome of William of Malmesbury joins Amalarius, Heribald, and Raban, in the same opposition to the true Catholic doctrine, but accuses them of being Stercoranists, and, therefore, implying an error as opposed to the doctrine of the Sacramentarians which you hold, as it is opposed to the doctrine held by the Catholic Church. But, suppose, as I said, for the sake of argument, that their opinions favoured your doctrine with regard to the blessed Eucharist, what follows? Therefore, persons holding communion with the Catholic Church in the ninth century were at liberty to call in question the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the blessed Eucharist. Reverend sir, this conclusion is not justified by the premises. The Church of Lyons, in the celebrated Three epistles, accused Amalarius “of poisoning the faith of Catholic France, by writings full of error and strange opinions,” and declares that his writings should be burned, and in the year 838 the errors of Amalarius and of his followers, Raban and Heribald, were again condemned by a synod of Bishops, held at Cressy. Therefore, reverend sir, it was not a matter of indifference in the ninth century to deny the real presence of Christ in the blessed Eucharist; but as the doctrine of Raban had but few supporters, it was allowed to die a natural death, not without having been reprobated, as I have shown, but without causing any great commotion in the church. John Scot revived the controversy in the middle of the ninth century, but he found no partisans, and again it died with him, and remained dead until the eleventh century, when it was revived by Berengarius, and as soon condemned by a synod convoked at Rome, by Leo the ninth, in the year 1050, and in the following year by the synod of Versailles, at which the work of Scotus was consigned to the flames, in execration of its heretical doctrine. Berengarius made a public retraction in another council, held at Turin, in the year 1055, and again in a synod of 113 bishops, convoked at Rome in the year 1059, from the various kingdoms of Europe. His retraction was sent by order of the synod to the various countries of Europe, for the purpose of repairing the scandal which the publicity and noise of his errors had given, and the heresy was thus, for the present, cut off in its very bud. Now, reverend sir, Paschasius announces publicly what was the universal belief of his age. The Church of Lyons, the synod of Cressy, and all the subsequent synods and councils held in Italy, France, and Germany, confirm his statement; wherefore I conclude, and I hope you will candidly say very justly, that the doctrine of the real presence was really the universal doctrine of the Christian church in the ninth and subsequent, as well as preceding centuries; and that if a few in the ninth century disputed the doctrine, they, by doing so, went against the universal faith of the Christian Church, and thereby incurred the severe animadversion and condemnation of the Catholic churches and bishops of the age in which they lived. In fine, that in proportion as the error of a few became more likely to do injury to the Catholic faith, in proportion did the church increase her energies to repress those evils, by condemning the errors themselves; causing the books containing the objectionable doctrines to be burned in abhorrence of them, and multiplying synods and councils until it terminated in the œcumenical Council of Trent.

But, reverend sir, I must not pass by another point in the proposed difficulty on which you seem to lay peculiar stress. You say Paschasius first wrote a treatise on transubstantiation in the year 831. Reverend sir, I do not suppose that you mean to assert the existence of a treatise as essential to the belief in transubstantiation; you might as well argue that the sun did not give light for some thousands of years, because so long no learned treatise appeared on the nature and properties of light. You certainly do not mean this. Then, I suppose, you mean by the word first, that Paschasius was the first to teach the doctrine of transubstantiation. If so, please open St. Cyril's works, and bear in mind that this holy Bishop of Jerusalem lived 500 years before Paschasius. You will find in his Fourth Catechism for catechumens, in language written expressly for the purpose of communicating instruction to beginners, the following discourse:—“When Christ himself has said of the bread, this is my body, and of the chalice, this is my blood, who will dare to doubt? Formerly he changed water into wine, and will we consider him unworthy of being believed when he changes wine into his blood? Judge it not by the taste but by faith. What seems to be bread is not bread, and what seems to be wine is not wine, although it may seem such to the taste; but it is the blood of Christ.” Reverend sir, what do you call this, if it be not the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation? Open St.

Ambrose, and you will find the following (Lib. de Initiationis, c. 48)—“Perhaps you will say, how can you assert that I receive the body of Christ, when I see something else? If the word of Christ was able to bring into existence what before did not exist, how much more easily is it not able to change things which are into what they are not?” Again, reverend sir, I ask, is not this transubstantiation? It would be superfluous to multiply testimonies. If, however, you require more, equally explicit, I shall be happy to supply you with them; but from what I have adduced, it is evident that, even if Paschasius were the first to write a treatise on transubstantiation, he was not certainly the first to teach and believe in the doctrine implied by it. It would likewise throw upon you, reverend sir, the extremely difficult task of explaining how it is that the eastern heretical churches separated from the communion of Rome since the beginning of the 5th century, and as opposed to her doctrines fully as much as is the Church of England since the Reformation, have become imbued with this Catholic tenet of the real presence of Christ in the blessed eucharist, which, nevertheless, Eutychians, Nestorians, and Arminians, as well as Greeks, defend and teach. Did they, too, receive it from the Latin monk?

In your second difficulty, you say, “the seventh general council held in Constantinople in the year 754, decreed that the sacrament was a commemoration, not a sacrifice.” Allow me, reverend sir, to correct an historical mistake into which you have fallen. There was no general council held in Constantinople in the eighth century, and, consequently, I know not where to look for the decree to which you allude. Catholics are not wont to confound the idea of a sacrament with that of a sacrifice, nor to say that the sacrament is the sacrifice; nevertheless, making the proper allowance for your want of correct information on this point, I shall be happy to be informed of the name of the council you refer to, the number of the decree, and the year when celebrated, so that I may be able, with accuracy, to refer to this (at least to me) novel decision.

Your third difficulty states, that the doctrine of transubstantiation was not an article of Catholic faith until the decision of the Council of Trent. Reverend and dear sir, you completely mistake the power of councils with regard to Catholic faith. The Catholic Church has her faith prior to the convocation of a council; nor is it in the power of any council, general or particular, to make that which previously was not contained in the body of Catholic faith, become, by its decision, an article of faith. The entire power of the church, assembled in council, as regards faith, is merely to declare that to be really contained in the Catholic faith which was contained from the beginning—which the church believed and taught from the beginning. Disputes and doubts affecting individual persons, places, or churches, sometimes render the true faith of the church obscure in those places, and the obscurity is removed by the universal church represented in council, which is not affected by local doubts or difficulties, but which has in its decisions the promised assistance of the Holy Ghost. In the fourth century the Council of Nice declared that the Son was consubstantial with the father, and anathematized whoever would deny the doctrine; but would you, reverend sir, thence infer, that the consubstantiality of the Father and Son was not contained in the deposit of Christian faith, or was not believed by the Church of God from the very foundation of Christianity? Apply this to the Council of Trent and you will have a case precisely parallel.

I remain, reverend dear sir, with sincere respect,  
Yours truly in Christ,  
R. A. WILSON.

John's-Hill, Waterford,  
March 11, 1852.

REV. AND DEAR SIR—I beg to acknowledge your letter of the 18th ult. I regret time did not permit me to answer it immediately.

You commence your letter by saying, “Mrs. F. has enclosed to me a communication received from you, containing, what you consider, three unanswerable difficulties to the Catholic doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the blessed Eucharist.” This statement is not quite correct. The following are the facts of the case.

I had, on several occasions, conversations with Mrs. F. on the points of controversy between Roman Catholics and Protestants. I stated to her, on one of these occasions, that I was prepared to show her religion to be a novel one, and to point out certain dates about which the various errors crept into the church. She asked me to give her such a date for the doctrine of transubstantiation. I wrote at the time, and partly from memory, the few hurried lines you received. She told me she would show them on the following day to some of the Waterford priests, and demand from them an answer; but, I suppose, they were not able to give her one, and, as a dernier resort, she forwarded them to you. Nor am I surprised at this, as a few days previously she had informed me, that not one of the Roman Catholic clergymen in Waterford was able either to write or preach a sermon—controversial or otherwise; and assigned this as a reason for their not